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NOTIFICATION OF ELECTION

(PCT Rule 61.2)

From the INTERNATIONAL BUREAU

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Date of mailing (day/month/year) 05 August 1998 (05.08.98)	
International application No. PCT/BR97/00081	Applicant's or agent's file reference
International filing date (day/month/year) 19 December 1997 (19.12.97)	Priority date (day/month/year) 18 December 1996 (18.12.96)
Applicant PEREGRINO FERREIRA, Paulo, César et al	

1. The designated Office is hereby notified of its election made:

☒ in the demand filed with the International Preliminary Examining Authority on:

20 July 1998 (20.07.98)

☐ in a notice effecting later election filed with the International Bureau on:2. The election ☒ was☐ was not

made before the expiration of 19 months from the priority date or, where Rule 32 applies, within the time limit under Rule 32.2(b).

The International Bureau of WIPO 34, chemin des Colombettes 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland Facsimile No.: (41-22) 740.14.35	Authorized officer Eugénia Santos Telephone No.: (41-22) 338.83.38
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PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference ÅL/Ru 40248	FOR FURTHER ACTION See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416)	
International application No. PCT/BR97/00081	International filing date (day/month/year) 19.12.1997	Priority date (day/month/year) 18.12.1996
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC ₆ C 12 Q 1/70		
Applicant Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais et al		

1. This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 4 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 8 sheets.

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

- I ☒ Basis of the report
- II ☐ Priority
- III ☐ Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
- IV ☐ Lack of unity of invention
- V ☒ Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
- VI ☐ Certain documents cited
- VII ☐ Certain defects in the international application
- VIII ☐ Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 20.07.1998	Date of completion of this report 22.03.1999
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/SE Patent- och registreringsverket Box 5055 S-102 42 STOCKHOLM Facsimile No. 08-667 72 88	Authorized officer Patrick Andersson Telephone No. 08-782 25 00

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/BR97/00081

I. Basis of the report

1. This report has been drawn on the basis of *(Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to the report since they do not contain amendments.)*:

☐ the international application as originally filed.

☒ the description, pages _____, as originally filed,

pages _____, filed with the demand,

pages 1 - 7, filed with the letter of 22.02.1999,

pages _____, filed with the letter of _____,

☒ the claims, Nos. _____, as originally filed,

Nos. _____, as amended under Article 19,

Nos. _____, filed with the demand,

Nos. 1 - 3, filed with the letter of 22.02.1999,

Nos. _____, filed with the letter of _____,

☒ the drawings, sheets/fig 1 - 3, as originally filed,

sheets/fig _____, filed with the demand

sheets/fig _____, filed with the letter of _____,

sheets/fig _____, filed with the letter of _____,

2. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

☐ the description, pages _____

☐ the claims, Nos. _____

☐ the drawings, sheets/fig _____

3. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).

4. Additional observations, if necessary:

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

PCT/BR97/00081

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. Statement**

Novelty (N)	Claims	<u>1-3</u>	YES
	Claims		NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims	<u>1-3</u>	YES
	Claims		NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims	<u>1-3</u>	YES
	Claims		NO

2. Citations and explanations

The claimed invention relates to an immunoenzymatic assay for detecting the presence of antibodies to the equine infectious anaemia virus (EIAV) recombinant p26 capsid antigen.

The assay comprises the following steps:

- a) binding the recombinant p26 capsid antigen to a solid support,
- b) reacting the bound antigen with a sample,
- c) removing the unbound test sample,
- d) reacting the bounded test antibody with a labelled antibody, and
- e) measuring the amount of bound antibody specific to the EIAV p26 capsid antigen in the test sample.

The following documents have been cited in the search report:

D1: US5427907

D2: US3932601

A document cited in the present description is also considered relevant namely,

D3: US4806467

.../...

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT

International application No.

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Supplemental Box

(To be used when the space in any of the preceding boxes is not sufficient)

Continuation of: V

All the documents relate to immunoenzymatic assays for EIAV. The assay of D1 comprises the principle step stated in the claimed invention i.e. steps a)-e) above. The objects of D1 are to overcome the risk of false-positives when using an antigen derived directly from a virus-culture and to use an antigen more easily obtained. The document differs from the claimed invention by using epitopes of the protein GP-45 instead of recombinant p26. D1 suggests the use of any antigenic, preferably envelope, protein from EIAV. To use p26 in an assay for EIAV is known from D3. It is a well-established in the art that recombinant produced proteins can be obtained easily and free from other proteins in their natural surrounding. Therefore a person skilled in the art could contemplate the use of a recombinant p26 in a immunoenzymatic assay as presently claimed. However, the presently claimed assay also resolves some false-negative results in comparison with the method in D3, see figure 3, this is considered unexpected. Thus, the invention according to claims 1-3 is considered to be novel, industrially applicable and to involve an inventive step.

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80 Rec'd PCT/PTO 18 JUN 1999
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Replaced by Ch 34

**METHOD AND COMPOSITION FOR THE DIAGNOSIS OF EQUINE
INFECTIOUS ANEMIA VIRUS DISEASE BY USING THE RECOMBINANT
CAPSID PROTEIN VIRUS (P26)**

5 TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of detecting antibodies against core antigen of equine infectious anemia virus (EIAV), using as antigen the non glycosylated recombinant protein (rgp26) in immunoenzymatic assays. More particularly, it relates to the use of recombinant protein p26 in kits for diagnosis of equine infectious anemia (EIA).

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

15 The equine infectious anemia (EIA) is one of the oldest diseases caused by virus, having been described for the first time in France by LIGNEE (Rec. Med. Vet., 20:30, 1843) and recognized as viral disease by VALLEE and CARRE (Acad. Sci., 139:331-333, 1904). The disease affects exclusively the members of the family Equidae presenting a worldwide distribution and of great economical importance consequently.

20 The EIA virus (EIAV) is classified as a lentivirus of the Retroviridae family (CHARMAN et al. J. Virol. 19(2):1073-1076, 1976), it is genetic and antigenically related to the other lentiviruses which are characterized by developing persistent infection in host. The EIA has played a specially important role in comparative virology and in the studies of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Besides their morphological identity, both viruses are similar in terms of nucleotide sequences that code for structural surface proteins. These group of virus present genetic and antigenic variants during persistent infections, which is associated to immune response scape (MONTAGNIER et al. Ann. Virol., 135:119-134, 1984, MONTELARO et al. J. Biol. Chem., 259:10539-10544, 1984, RUSHLOW et al. Virology, 155:309-321, 1986, STREICHER et al. J. Am. Med. Assoc. 256:2390-2391, 1986, STOLER et al. J. Am. Med. Assoc. 256:2360-2364, 1986 and HAHN et al. Science, 232:1548-1553, 1986).

35 The transmission of EIAV occurs mainly through bite of arthropods vectors (tabanideos) which inoculate the virus into the animal's blood stream

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(mechanical transmission) when feeding themselves. The way of transmission is responsible for the high prevalence of EIA in areas favorable to the life cycle of vectors (ISSEL et al. *Vet.* 17:251-286, 1988). The EIAV can also be transmitted by the placenta and colostro of mares with high virus levels, and by needles and surgical instruments contaminated with blood (COGGINS **Comparative diagnosis of viral diseases**, NY, 4:646-658, 1981). The course of infections shows different clinical forms of the disease (subacute, chronic and mainly inapparent or asymptomatic) in horses (ISSEL & COGGINS, *J. Am. Vet. Med. Assoc.* 174(7):727-33, 1979) and the most prominent signs are the fever episodes, hemolytic anemia, anorexia, fast weight loss and ventral edema.

The laboratory diagnosis plays a decisive role in the control and prevention of EIA if considering the high prevalence of asymptomatic carriers, non conclusive and possibility to confuse clinical diagnosis with other diseases as the trypanosomiasis, pyroplasmosis, leptospirosis, hepatitis and by parasites.

The diagnosis of EIAV has been done through the detection of specific antibodies against surface antigen of virus present in the serum of affected animals by using the Coggins or agar gel diffusion test (U.S.Pat. nro.3,929,982 and U.S.Pat. No. 3,932,601). In the Coggins test the antigen and sample serum is placed side by side in an agarose gel plate. If EIA antibodies are present in the test serum, they will form a precipitin line when diffusing toward the agarose gel.

This methodology is inherently insensitive since EIAV antigen preparation derived from spleen of infected animals or equine derme cultures cells may be contaminated with non-EIAV antigens during its preparation. Besides, antibodies against non-EIAV antigens may be present in the test serum and can react with the non-EIA antigens forming a variety of nonspecific precipitin lines. Even if, EIAV-antigen batches can be purified the Coggins test is laborious, time-consuming and demanding of considerable expertise in interpretation of results. The Coggins test procedure takes twenty-four to forty-eight hours for the formation of clearly visible precipitating lines, delaying results.

Porter (U.S.Pat.No.4,806,467) discloses a method for detecting the EIA virus using a competitive enzyme-linked immunoabsorbent assay incorporating a purified viral antigen and a monoclonal antibody. To obtain the antigen, the

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EIAV must first be cultured. The antigen used was p26 capsid protein of the EIAV and is obtained through (purification of the cultured virus by a variety of means) well known in the art. The technique of virus tissue cultures increases the possibility of assay yield false positive results since the virus may be contaminated with other forms of protein or even another virus. Additionally, the EIAV is hard to culture, making Porter's approach very difficult for large scale production.

The use of a synthetic peptide in an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay for the detection of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) was disclosed by Shoeman, R.L. et al (Analytical Biochemistry 161:370-379,1987).

Darrel & Peisheng, the U.S. Patent No. 5,427,907, discloses a method to use a synthetic peptide as the antigen in an immunoassay for the detection of antibodies against the equine infectious anemia virus in the serum of horses. This procedure include only the search of some epitopes of a virus proteins.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an assay for the detection of the equine infectious anemia virus antibodies which may be fast, easily and quickly performed by using the stable recombinant envelope protein (rgp26) which may be produced in sufficient amounts at a low cost.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other objects, features and many attendant advantages of the invention will be better understood upon a reading of the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

Figure 1 shows schematically the method of diagnosis

Figure 2 shows the titration of positive and negative sera in Elisa with the recombinant protein rgp26 as antigen.

Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution of the optical density (OD) in Elisa with the recombinant protein gp26 as antigen with 84 positive and 70 negative horses samples, previously tested by IDGA and ELISA by using EIAV-antigen produced in cell cultures

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to provide a method of immunodiagnosis for EIA disease that uses the recombinant protein p26 corresponding derived from viral envelope of EIAV. The method consists of binding the recombinant antigen to solid supports (microtiter plates, tubes, beads or nitrocellulose or nylon papers or any kind that allow protein binding) and to proceed the analysis of the sera (presence of antibodies) from animals suspected of infection with the EIAV.

The recombinant protein p26 is added to a solid phase support and incubated for sufficient time to ensure that protein was bound to the support. The equine test sample is added to the support and incubated for a period of time sufficient to permit that any EIA-antibodies are removed from sample.

Labeled conjugate is added which binds to the protein-antibody complex. Following enough time to allow such binding, any unbound labeled conjugate is removed by washing. Labeled conjugate is added which binds to the protein-antibody complex. Following enough time to allow such binding, any unbound labeled conjugate is removed by washing. High level of bound conjugate indicates a positive result, which mean presence of EIA viral antibodies. A low level of bound conjugate indicates a negative result which mean absence or undetectable level of EIA viral antibodies..

A variety of commercially available solid phase supports may be used for protein binding. The direct binding of equine antibodies present in the test serum to the solid phase support is likely to result in a false positive reading. To prevent such binding, the blocking solution is used to fill any empty binding sites on the support which did not bind antibody-protein. Any substance which will not react with EIA viral antibodies and antigen will function as a blocker. A conjugate is something which will recognize and bind with the test serum EIA viral antibody.

The conjugate may be labeled using a variety of labeling means, including but not limited to: enzyme labeling, fluorescent labeling, and magnetic labeling. If enzymatic labeling is the labeling means chosen, the conjugate is labeled with an enzyme preferably select from the group consisting of horseradish peroxidase and alkaline phosphatase. Other enzymes may be used.

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When an enzyme label is used, the labeled conjugate is detected by adding an amount of a substrate which will recognize and react with the enzyme label to form a product that will produce a color change visible to the naked eye. The presence of color indicates a sufficient level of test serum antibodies to indicate infection. An absence of color is an indicator of a lack of infection, as the animal did not produce a significant number of antibodies to the virus. Hence, the labeled conjugate had few antibodies, if any, to bind with and was subsequently removed from the support. There are a variety of both peroxidase and phosphatase substrates which will react with horseradish peroxidase and alkaline phosphatase enzymes, respectively to form a colored product.

A preferred peroxidase substrate is an ortho-phenylenediamine/hydrogen peroxide solution. The intensity of the color of the product may be quantified using a spectrophotometer to read absorbance. However, measuring the absorbance is not necessary to obtain an accurate reading of the results of the assay.

The titration of positive and negative sera in Elisa with 1 μ g recombinant protein p26 as antigen (Figure 2) shows the detection of antibodies anti-p26 in the ELISA test using dilutions of the serum from 1:4 to 1:256 and obtaining from 0.800 to 0.400 OD. The negative controls demonstrate that there is a non specific reaction.

The optical density obtained when sera from 84 positive and 70 negative horses were tested is presented on Figure 3, showing the frequency of the different optical densities obtained.

An animal was experimentally infected and its sera tested with the ELISA p26. Figure 4 shows that specific antibodies were detected seven days after the infection together with the appearance of fever.

In order that this invention may be better understood the follow examples for illustrative purposes only, are described. The examples illustrate the present invention and are not intended to limit it in spirit or scope.

EXAMPLE 1

The process can be better understood through the following description in consonance with the illustration in Figure 1 where the binding of the antigen

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(recombinant protein p26) to the solid support (1), it is done by its dilution in carbonate buffer (Na_2CO_3 0.1-0.5M; NaHCO_3 0.1-0.5M, pH 8.0-9.6), added in the concentrations of 0.01-1g and incubated the temperature of 40-80°C for 18-24 hours in micro-technique plates, tubes or beads followed by electrotransference or passive transference to nitrocellulose or nylon supports. After antigen binding, the support was washed for 3 to 6 times with buffer solution (0.01-0.02 M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02 M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04M KCl, 0.85-0.9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), and then with 0.05-0.1% of tween-20 (Buffer-Tween). To block the inespecific sites of binding (2) the used support was incubated with block solution (skimmed powdered milk 1-5% bovine , 1-5% albumin or 1-5% casein in Tween buffer) for 30-60 min at 23°C-37°C. After a new wash of the support with Tween buffer, as described previously, the positive and negative control and the serum samples were diluted in Tween buffer, to bound to the antigen linked to the solid support (3), and incubated at 23°C-37°C. After new wash of the support with Tween buffer, the conjugate was added, where the anti- equine immunoglobuline binds to the antibodies that are tied up to the antigens (4). Conjugate can be an equine anti-immunoglobuline conjugated to the enzyme peroxidase or any other enzyme as acetylcolinesterase, lactate desidrogenase, galactosidase, glicose oxidase, alkaline fosfatase, or another. This conjugate was diluted in Tween buffer in agreement with its title and added to the support and then incubated at 23°C-37°C for 30-60 min. A new wash of the support with Tween buffer and the development of the reaction was proceeded (5) with the enzyme of the conjugate, transforms the substrate of colorless to a red-faced product. The developing solution is composed of the substrate of the enzyme used in the conjugate that for the peroxidase for example is the ortofenilenodiamino diluted in phosphate or citrate buffer 0.1-0.2 M, pH 5.0-8.0. After the color development, which is proportional to the concentration of specific antibodies in each sample, solution of acid was used (sulfuric acid) for stop-reaction (6), where the acid interrupts the previous reaction. For the final result the measurement(7) of the color intensity formed in each reaction (sample) was made. This reading was made visually or in espectrophotometer, in absorbance, with a specific filter for the color formed by the developing solution.

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EXAMPLE 2

The kit for diagnosis of the EIAV may contain the the following products: (a) the antigen recombinant p26 from EIA coated to the solid support (microplate, microtiter wells, tubes, capillary tubes, sticks, dipsticks, beads) with different chemical composition (polystyrene, polypropilene, polyethylene, polypropylene, poly-carbonate, polyvinyl, polystyrene, latex, nitrocellulose, nylon; cellulose, polyacrylamide, cross-linked dextran and microcrystalline glass (b) the anti-equine immunoglobulin conjugated with label that is selected from the group consisting of an enzyme, a fluorescent marker, avidin-biotin (c) the substrate for the label as orthophenilenodiamine and H_2O_2 (d) a blocking solution (0.01-0.02M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04M KCl, 0.85-0.9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), with 0.05-0.1% of Tween 20 and skimmed powdered milk 1-5% bovine, 1-5% albumin or 1-5% casein (e) a diluent solution for specimen and conjugate (0.01-0.02 M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04M KCl, 0.85-0.9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), with 0.05-0.1% of Tween 20 and 1% skimmed powdered milk (f) a diluent solution for substrate 0.1M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.1M C6H8O7 pH 5,0 (f) stop solution 7N H_2SO_4 (g) wash solution (0.01-0.02M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04 M KCl, 0.85-0.9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), with 0.05-0,1% of Tween 20 (h) positive control inactivated horse serum (i) negative control inactivated horse serum

While the present invention has been described in connection with an example, it will be understood that modifications and variations apparent to those ordinary skill in the art are within the scope of the present invention.

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An immunoenzymatic assay for detecting the presence of antibody to the equine infectious anemia virus recombinant p26 capsid antigen in equine test samples comprising:

- (a) binding the recombinant p26 capsid antigen to a solid support,
- (b) reacting the bound antigen with a clinical sample,
- (c) removing the unbound test sample,
- (d) reacting the bounded test antibody with a labeled antibody
- (e) measuring the amount of bound antibody specific to the equine anemia infectious virus p26 capsid antigen in the test sample

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2. The immunoassay according to claim 1, wherein said label is selected from the group consisting of an enzyme, a fluorescent marker, avidin-biotin.

3. The immunoassay according to claim 1, wherein said solid support is selected from the group consisting of polystyrene or polypropylene microtiter wells, polyethylene, polypropylene, polycarbonate, polyvinyl, polystyrene, or glass test tubes, capillary tubes, dipsticks, or beads; latex beads; nitrocellulose, nylon; cellulose, polyacrylamide, cross-linked dextran and microcrystalline glass.

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METHOD AND COMPOSITION FOR THE DIAGNOSIS OF EQUINE INFECTIOUS ANEMIA VIRUS DISEASE BY USING THE RECOMBINANT CAPSID PROTEIN VIRUS (P26)

5 TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a method of detecting antibodies against core antigen of equine infectious anemia virus (EIAV), using as antigen the non glycosylated recombinant protein (rgp26) in immunoenzymatic assays. More particularly, it relates to the use of recombinant protein p26 in kits for
10 diagnosis of equine infectious anemia (EIA).

BACKGROUND TO THE INVENTION

15 The equine infectious anemia (EIA) is one of the oldest diseases caused by virus, having been described for the first time in France by LIGNEE (**Rec. Med. Vet.**, 20:30, 1843) and recognized as viral disease by VALLEE and CARRE (**Acad. Sci.**, 139:331-333, 1904). The disease affects exclusively the members of the family **Equidae** presenting a worldwide distribution and of
20 great economical importance consequently .

The EIA virus (EIAV) is classified as a lentivirus of the **Retroviridae** family (CHARMAN et al. **J. Virol.** 19(2):1073 -1076, 1976), it is genetic and antigenically related to the other lentiviruses which are characterized by developing persistent infection in host. The EIA has played a specially
25 important role in comparative virology and in the studies of the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Besides their morphological identity, both viruses are similar in terms of nucleotide sequences that code for structural surface proteins. These group of virus present genetic and antigenic variants during persistent infections, which is associated to immune response scape
30 (MONTAGNIER et al. **Ann. Virol.**, 135:119-134, 1984, MONTELARO et al. **J. Biol. Chem.**, 259:10539-10544, 1984, RUSHLOW et al. **Virology**, 155:309-321, 1986, STREICHER et al. **J. Am. Med. Assoc.** 256:2390-2391, 1986, STOLER et al. **J. Am. Med. Assoc.** 256:2360-2364, 1986 and HAHN et al. **Science**, 232:1548-1553, 1986).

35 The transmission of EIAV occurs mainly through bite of arthropods vectors (tabanideos) which inoculate the virus into the animal's blood stream

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10 fever episodes, hemolytic anemia, anorexia, fast weight loss and ventral edema.

The laboratory diagnosis plays a decisive role in the control and prevention of EIA if considering the high prevalence of assymptomatic carriers, non conclusive and possibility to confuse clinical diagnosis with other diseases
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The diagnose of EIAV has been done through the detection of specific antibodies against surface antigen of virus present in the serum of affected animals by using the Coggins or agar gel diffusion test (U.S.Pat. nro.3,929,982
20 and U.S.Pat. No. 3,932,601). In the Coggins test the antigen and sample serum is placed side by side in an agarose gel plate. If EIA antibodies are present in the test serum, they will form a precipitin line when diffusing toward the agarose gel .

This methodology is inherently insensitive since EIAV antigen
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30 is laborious, time-consuming and demanding of considerable expertise in interpretation of results. The Coggins test procedure takes twenty-four to forty-eight hours for the formation of clearly visible precipitating lines, delayinf results.

Porter (U.S.Pat.No.4,806,467) discloses a method for detecting the EIA virus using a competitite enzyme-linked immunoabsorbent assay incorporating
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EIAV must first be cultured. The antigen used was p26 capsid protein of the EIAV and is obtained through (purification of the cultured virus by a variety of means) well known in the art. The technique of virus tissue cultures increases the possibility of assay yield false positive results since the virus may be contaminated with other forms of protein or even another virus. Additionally, the EIAV is hard to culture, making Porter's approach very difficult for large scale production.

The use of a synthetic peptide in an enzyme linked immunosorbent assay for the detection of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) was disclosed by Shoeman, R.L. et al (Analytical Biochemistry 161:370-379,1987).

Darrel & Peisheng, the U.S. Patent No. 5,427,907, discloses a method to use a synthetic peptide as the antigen in an immunoassay for the detection of antibodies against the equine infectious anemia virus in the serum of horses. This procedure include only the search of some epitopes of a virus proteins.

It is an object of the present invention to provide an assay for the detection of the equine infectious anemia virus antibodies which may be fast, easily and quickly performed by using the stable recombinant envelope protein (rgp26) which may be produced in sufficient amounts at a low cost.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other objects, features and many attendant advantages of the invention will be better understood upon a reading of the following detailed description when considered in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

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Figure 1 shows schematically the method of diagnosis

Figure 2 shows the titration of positive and negative sera in Elisa with the recombinant protein rgp26 as antigen.

Figure 3 demonstrates the distribution of the optical density (OD) in Elisa with the recombinant protein gp26 as antigen with 84 positive and 70 negative horses samples, previously tested by IDGA and ELISA by using EIAV-antigen produced in cell cultures

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to provide a method of immunodiagnosis for EIA disease that uses the recombinant protein p26 corresponding derived from viral envelope of EIAV. The method consists of binding the recombinant antigen to solid supports (microtiter plates, tubes, beads or nitrocelullose or nylon papers or any kind that allow protein binding) and to proceed the analysis of the sera (presence of antibodies) from animals suspected of infection with the EIAV.

The recombinant protein p26 is added to a solid phase support and incubated for sufficient time to ensure that protein was bound to the support. The equine test sample is added to the support and incubated for a period of time sufficient to permit that any EIA-antibodies are removed from sample.

Labeled conjugate is added which binds to the protein-antibody complex. Following enough time to allow such binding, any unbound labeled conjugate is removed by washing. Labeled conjugate is added which binds to the protein-antibody complex. Following enough time to allow such binding, any unbound labeled conjugate is removed by washing. High level of bound conjugate indicates a positive result, which mean presence of EIA viral antibodies. A low level of bound conjugate indicates a negative result which mean absence or undetectable level of EIA viral antibodies..

A variety of commercially available solid phase supports may be used for protein binding. The direct binding of equine antibodies present in the test serum to the solid phase support is likely to result in a false positive reading. To prevent such binding, the blocking solution is used to fill any empty binding sites on the support which did not bind antibody-protein. Any substance which will not react with EIA viral antibodies and antigen will function as a blocker. A conjugate is something which will recognize and bind with the test serum EIA viral antibody.

The conjugate may be labeled using a variety of labeling means, including but not limited to: enzyme labeling, fluorescent labeling, and magnetic labeling. If enzymatic labeling is the labeling means chosen, the conjugate is labeled with an enzyme preferably select from the group consisting of horseradish peroxidase and alkaline phosphatase. Other enzymes may be used.

When an enzyme label is used, the labeled conjugate is detected by adding an amount of a substrate which will recognize and react with the enzyme label to form a product that will produce a color change visible to the naked eye. The presence of color indicates a sufficient level of test serum antibodies to indicate infection. An absence of color is an indicator of a lack of infection, as the animal did not produce a significant number of antibodies to the virus. Hence, the labeled conjugate had few antibodies, if any, to bind with and was subsequently removed from the support. There are a variety of both peroxidase and phosphatase substrates which will react with horseradish peroxidase and alkaline phosphatase enzymes, respectively to form a colored product.

A preferred peroxidase substrate is an ortho-phenylenediamine/hydrogen peroxide solution. The intensity of the color of the product may be quantified using a spectrophotometer to read absorbance. However, measuring the absorbance is not necessary to obtain an accurate reading of the results of the assay.

The titration of positive and negative sera in Elisa with 1 μ g recombinant protein p26 as antigen (Figure 2) shows the detection of antibodies anti-p26 in the ELISA test using dilutions of the serum from 1:4 to 1:256 and obtaining from 0.800 to 0.400 OD. The negative controls demonstrate that there is a non specific reaction.

The optical density obtained when sera from 84 positive and 70 negative horses were tested is presented on Figure 3, showing the frequency of the different optical densities obtained.

An animal was experimentally infected and its sera tested with the ELISA p26. Figure 4 shows that specific antibodies were detected seven days after the infection together with the appearance of fever.

In order that this invention may be better understood the following examples for illustrative purposes only, are described. The examples illustrate the present invention and are not intended to limit it in spirit or scope.

EXAMPLE 1

The process can be better understood through the following description in consonance with the illustration in Figure 1 where the binding of the antigen

(recombinant protein p26) to the solid support (1), it is done by its dilution in carbonate buffer (Na_2CO_3 0.1-0.5M; NaHCO_3 0.1-0.5M, pH 8.0-9.6), added in the concentrations of 0.01-1g and incubated the temperature of 40-80°C for 18-24 hours in micro-technique plates, tubes or beads followed by electrotransference or passive transference to nitrocelullose or nylon supports. After antigen binding, the support was washed for 3 to 6 times with buffer solution (0.01-0.02 M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02 MNa_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04M KCl, 0.85-0.9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), and then with 0.05-0.1% of tween-20 (Buffer-Tween). To block the inespecific sites of binding (2) the used support was incubated with block solution (skimmed powdered milk 1-5% bovine , 1-5% albumin or 1-5% casein in Tween buffer) for 30-60 min at 23°C-37°C. After a new wash of the support with Tween buffer, as described previously, the positive and negative control and the serum samples were diluted in Tween buffer, to bound to the antigen linked to the solid support (3), and incubated at 23°C-37°C. After new wash of the support with Tween buffer, the conjugate was added, where the anti- equine immunoglobuline binds to the antibodies that are tied up to the antigens (4). Conjugate can be an equine anti-immunoglobuline conjugated to the enzyme peroxidase or any other enzyme as acetylcolinesterase, lactate desidrogenase, galactosidase, glicose oxidase, alkaline fosfatase, or another. This conjugate was diluted in Tween buffer in agreement with its title and added to the support and then incubated at 23°C-37°C for 30-60 min. A new wash of the support with Tween buffer and the development of the reaction was proceeded (5) with the enzyme of the conjugate, transforms the substrate of colorless to a red-faced product. The developing solution is composed of the substrate of the enzyme used in the conjugate that for the peroxidase for example is the ortofenilenodiamino diluted in phosphate or citrate buffer 0.1-0.2 M, pH 5.0-8.0. After the color development, which is proportional to the concentration of specific antibodies in each sample, solution of acid was used (sulfuric acid) for stop-reaction (6), where the acid interrupts the previous reaction. For the final result the measurement(7) of the color intensity formed in each reaction (sample) was made. This reading was made visually or in espectrophotometer, in absorbance, with a specific filter for the color formed by the developing solution.

EXAMPLE 2

The kit for diagnosis of the EIAV may contain the the following products: (a) the antigen recombinant p26 from EIA coated to the solid support (microplate, microtiter wells, tubes, capillary tubes, sticks, dipsticks, beads) with different chemical composition (polystyrene, polypropilene, polyethylene, polypropylene, poly-carbonate, polyvinyl, polystyrene, latex, nitrocellulose, nylon; cellulose, polyacrylamide, cross-linked dextran and microcrystalline glass (b) the anti-equine immunoglobulin conjugated with label that is selected from the group consisting of an enzyme, a fluorescent marker, avidin-biotin (c) the substrate for the label as orthophenilenodiamine and H_2O_2 (d) a blocking solution (0.01-0.02M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04M KCl, 0,85-0,9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), with 0.05-0.1% of Tween 20 and skimmed powdered milk 1-5% bovine, 1-5% albumin or 1-5%casein (e) a diluent solution for specimen and conjugate (0.01-0.02 M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04M KCl, 0.85-0.9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), with 0.05-0.1% of Tween 20 and 1% skimmed powdered milk (f) a diluent solution for substrate 0.1M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.1M $C_6H_8O_7$ pH 5,0 (f) stop solution 7N H_2SO_4 (g) wash solution (0.01-0.02M NaH_2PO_4 , 0.01-0.02M Na_2HPO_4 , 0.02-0.04 M KCl, 0.85-0.9% NaCl pH 7.0-7.5), with 0.05-0,1% of Tween 20 (h) positive control inactivated horse serum (I) negative control inactivated horse serum

While the present invention has been described in connection with an example, it will be understood that modifications and variations apparent to those ordinary skill in the art are within the scope of the present invention.

25 WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An immunoenzymatic assay for detecting the presence of antibody to the equine infectious anemia virus recombinant p26 capsid antigen in equine test samples comprising:
 - (a) binding the recombinant p26 capsid antigen to a solid support,
 - (b) reacting the bound antigen with a clinical sample,
 - (c) removing the unbound test sample,
 - (d) reacting the bounded test antibody with a labeled antibody
 - (e) measuring the amount of bound antibody specific to the equine anemia infectious virus p26 capsid antigen in the test sample

2. The immunoassay according to claim 1, wherein said label is selected from the group consisting of an enzyme, a fluorescent marker, avidin-biotin.

3. The immunoassay according to claim 1, wherein said solid support is selected from the group consisting of polystyrene or polypropilene microtiter wells, polyethylene, polypropylene, polycarbonate, polyvinyl, polystyrene, or glass test tubes, capillary tubes, dipsticks, or beads; latex beads; nitrocellulose, nylon; cellulose, polyacrylamide, cross-linked dextran and microcrystalline glass.

Figure 1

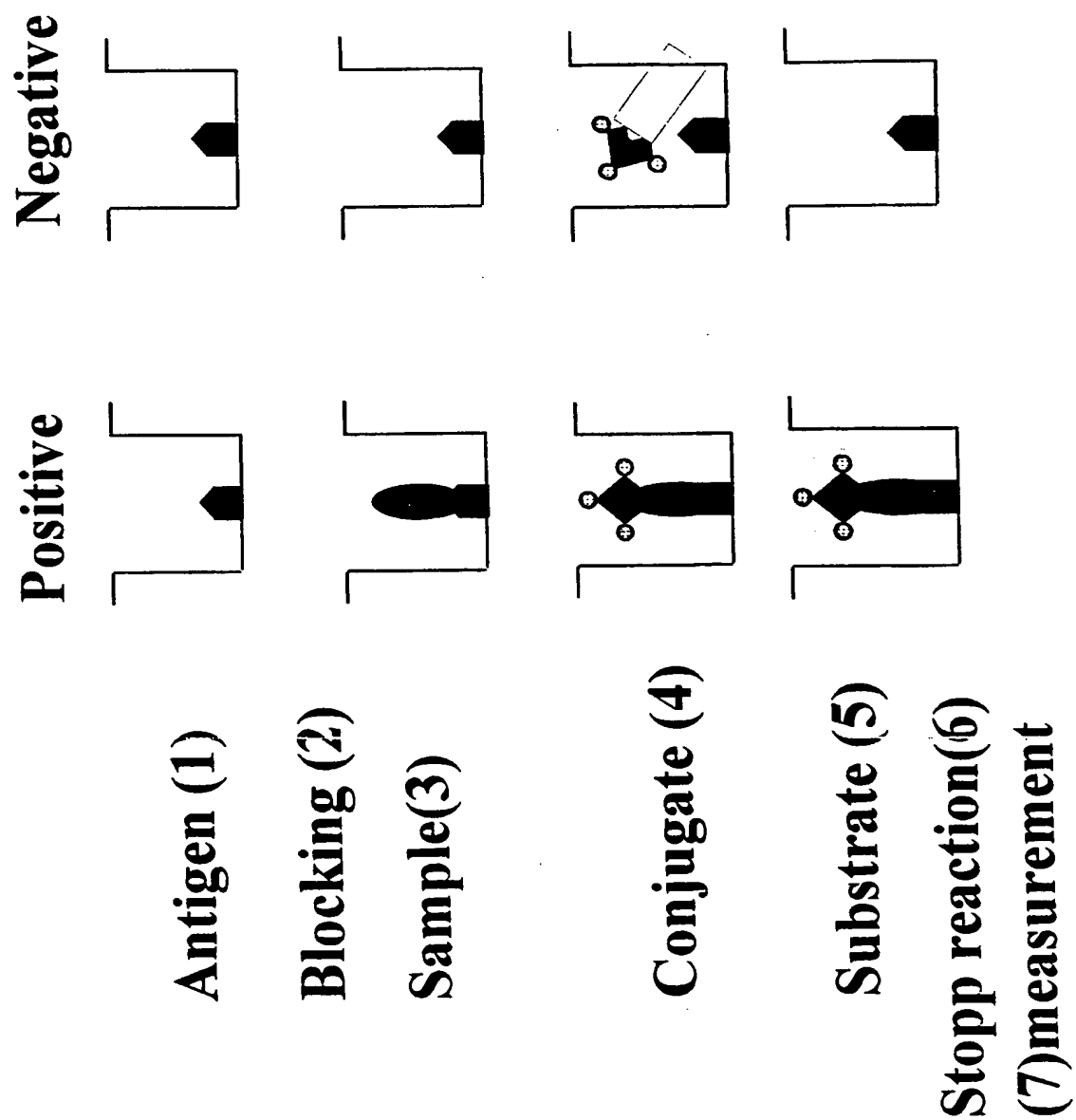


Figure 2

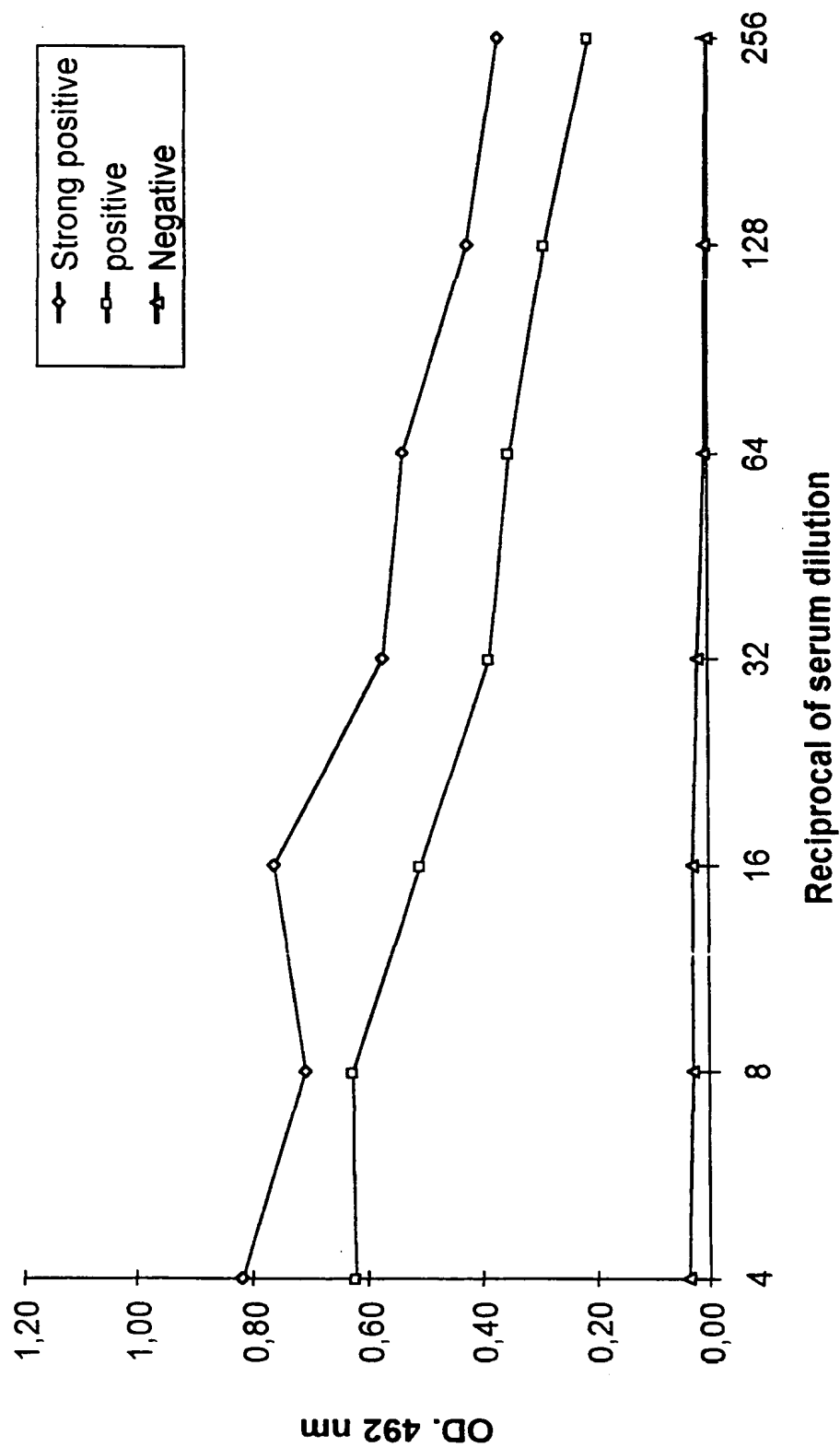
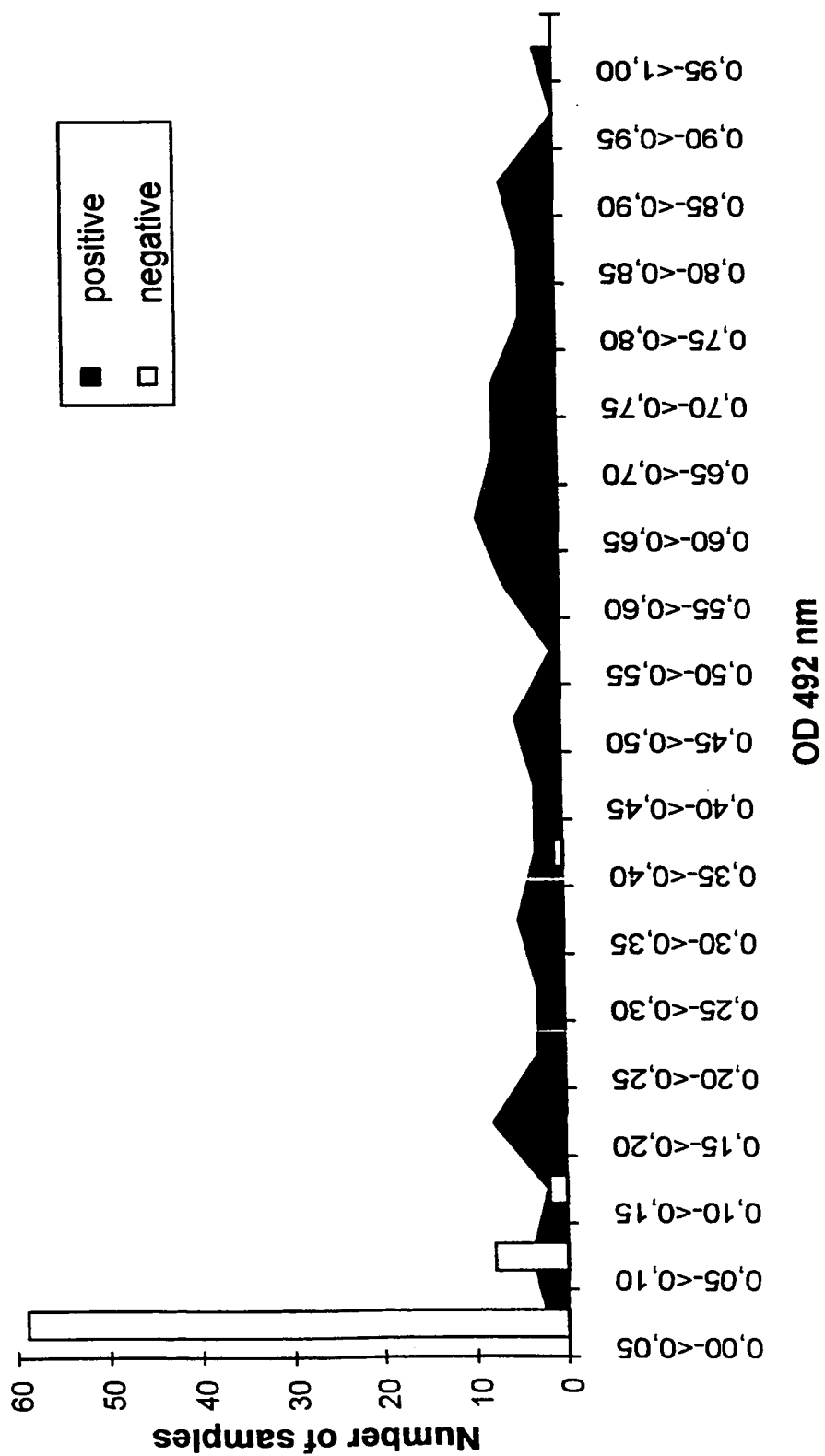


Figure 3



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/BR 97/00081

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC⁶: C 12 Q 1/70

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC⁶: C 12 Q 1/70

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

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C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5 427 907 A (PETERSON et al.) 27 June 1995 (27.06.95), abstract.	1
A	US 3 932 601 A (COGGINS) 13 January 1976 (13.01.76), abstract. -----	1



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

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"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

04 May 1998 (04.05.98)

Date of mailing of the international search report

15 May 1998 (15.05.98)

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/BR 97/00081

In Recherchenbericht angeführtes Patentedokument Patent document cited in search report Document de brevet cité dans le rapport de recherche	Datum der Veröffentlichung Publication date Date de publication	Mitglied(er) der Patentfamilie Patent family member(s) Membre(s) de la famille de brevets	Datum der Veröffentlichung Publication date Date de publication
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